

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a telephony service on a telephony network, the method comprising:

establishing a telephonic connection between a caller and a call recipient;

receiving a command signal on a network device during ~~[[any]]~~a call set-up phase in the call process; and

initiating a transaction between the caller and the call recipient, as applied to the call set up information, in response to receiving the command signal, the transaction being other than a standard call connection transaction, the transaction affecting billing for the telephonic connection,

wherein the command signal is transmitted from telephone equipment of the caller and being other than a standard call connect or disconnect command.

2. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the received command signal ~~is initiated by the caller during a call set up phase or a call connected phase~~ overrides the conventional billing protocol of a telephony network supporting the telephony service.

3. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein ~~the transaction is a service provided to the caller or the call recipient~~ initiating a service to the caller or the call recipient comprises initiating a transaction between the caller and the call recipient.

4. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, further comprising transmitting a prompt indicating a request to provide the command signal.

5. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the transaction is automatically initiated in response to at least one criteria.

6. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 5, wherein at least one criteria is an attribute associated with the caller or call recipient.

7. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the command signal is issued by the caller prior to the call connect command.

8. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 7, wherein the command signal is appended to a dialed telephone number.

9. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the data signal is associated with the activation of at least one key of a telephone.

10. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 9, wherein a plurality of keys are associated with a plurality of transactions, and wherein each of the plurality of keys is associated with a single transaction from among the plurality of transactions.

11. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 10, wherein a "*" key is associated with telephony and billing functions, a "0" key is associated with interactive network operator and information services access, and a "#" key is associated with commercial banking transactions between the caller and the call recipient.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the command signal is received from a telephone, and wherein the telephone, upon activation of a dedicated key, transmits the command signal.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 12, wherein the dedicated key is selected from a group comprising a “@” symbol, a color coded key, a programmable key, a menu item, and a button.

14. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the command signal is received from a telephone, and wherein the telephone, upon activation of a biometric trigger, transmits the command signal.

15. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the command signal comprises an audio tone transmitted from a mobile telephone.

16. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, further comprising automatically associating a function indicated by the command signal with the caller as identified by a telephone number of the caller.

17. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 16, wherein the telephone number of the caller is derived from a caller line identity (CLI).

18. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, further comprising automatically associating the transaction with the command signal based on the call recipient.

19. (New) A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the command signal is transmitted from the telephone equipment of the caller by operation of one individual key on said telephone equipment.